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ABSTRACT

The changing role of the principal under school-based management is examined in this paper. The implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act in 1989 shifted responsibility for school governance from the Central Board of Education to school-based management councils at each of the city's schools. Interviews were conducted with 10 elementary and 4 high school principals. With regard to role changes, principals reported that they have assumed the roles of information provider and leader for their local school councils (LSCs). They also said that they must now share authority with various constitutional groups and consult with LSCs and faculty on most decisions. They have greater discretion over budgeting and flexibility in programming, but experienced the following negative changes in the work environment: longer hours; lack of job security; accountability to 10 new bosses; and additional responsibilities without pay. External factors that affected principals' work included an underfunded system and an unresponsive central office. Other issues to be addressed are the need to delegate tasks and share accountability. A summary table is included. (Contains 6 references.) (LMI)

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Chicago Principals Under School Based Management: New Roles and Realities of the Job

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Chicago Principals Under School Based Management:
New Roles and Realities of the Job

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the implementation of Chicago School Reform Act (Public Act 85-1418) in the fall of 1989, the governance structure of Chicago Public Schools has been altered drastically. This legislation shifted responsibility for school governance from the Central Board of Education to site based management councils established at each of the city's approximately 540 public schools. Local school council membership is composed of six parents, two teachers, two community representatives, the school principal, and a student in the high schools. LSCs, as they are called, have the responsibilities of principal evaluation and selection and approving and monitoring a plan of school improvement and the school's budget.

The Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance is currently in the third year of a five year project to monitor and conduct research on the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act. Panel monitoring and researching efforts have been focused in two areas. First, we have collected and reported baseline data on school governance issues. Here, we have collected and reported information on the composition and operation of LSCs and offered practical suggestions to councils about how they might become more effective decision making bodies. In addition, we have interviewed principals and reported their early perceptions about school reform.[1] Second, Panel monitoring and researching efforts have focused on non-governance issues. Here we have collected and disseminated data on school improvement plans and curricular and instructional changes which are occurring in schools and are currently involved in an analysis of student test scores throughout the entire school district. This paper adds to our understanding of school governance issues by exploring the role of the principal under school based management (SBM) in Chicago.

The principalship has been affected by the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act more than any other job. Principals who in the past made decisions in collaboration with their faculty and with central and district officers now make decisions in collaboration their parent-dominated LSCs. They no longer serve as line managers whose sole role is to carry out district and central office directives but must now answer to their councils' concerns. Further complicating the principalship is the fact that although members

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[1]See J.Q. Easton and S.L. Storey, et. al. (1990), *Local School Council Meetings During the First Year of Chicago School Reform*, Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance; J.Q. Easton, ed., (1991), *Decision Making and School Improvement: LSCs in the First Two Years of Reform*, Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance; D.J. Ford and S.P. Ryan et. al. (1991), *Making the Most of School Reform: Suggestions for More Effective Local School Councils*, Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance; and D.J. Ford (1991), *The School Principal and Chicago School Reform: Principals' Early Perceptions of Reform Initiatives*, Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance.

of the LSC, principals still maintain a unique position in their school by virtue of the office and educational expertise that they hold. Principals are expected to be the "educational leader" of the school. These new circumstances have resulted in principals adopting new roles as they undertake their work.

This paper seeks to explore Chicago's school principals' perceptions of their jobs in the new circumstances in which they find themselves. Specifically, this paper seeks to identify 1) the roles principals play on their LSCs; 2) principals' perceptions of how their jobs have changed with the implementation of school based management in Chicago; and 3) what external factors continue to affect principals as they do their work.

A. Research Overview

Ten elementary and four high schools are currently participating in our monitoring project. These schools were initially identified using a random sample stratified by race and region of the city to ensure that they reflected the characteristics of the district as a whole. During the first two years of the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act, Panel staff members attended 251 LSC meetings, and interviewed LSC chair persons, teachers, and the school principal at each school. This report utilizes data collected in our second set of interviews with principals. The twelve interviews analyzed for this paper were conducted primarily during the spring and summer of 1991.[2]

Interviews lasted about one hour. Principals were questioned about their role on the LSC, their relationship with the council, the school improvement plan, and the functioning of their Professional Personnel Advisory committee (PPAC), a group of teachers that advises the principal and council on curricular issues. We also asked principals general questions about how the implementation of the school reform act has affected their schools. Interviews were transcribed and content analyzed to identify descriptive themes.

B. Related Research

The body of educational literature most pertinent to this paper is that of school decentralization. In this literature, it is almost universally accepted that with decentralization, the roles that principals play in schools must change. Brown (1991) notes both the major changes that must occur in the principalship and the principal's influence over how decentralization proceeds. He writes,

> The role most affected by decentralization is clearly that of the school principal. No other person will encounter more changes, more need to adjust, and more potential to make a difference both to his or her school and to the way decentralization works at the school level. (79)

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[2]Because of scheduling difficulties and school demands, one interview was conducted during the 1991-92 academic school year. During this interview, the principal was asked to respond to questions in retrospect, answering them in relation to her first LSC and her experiences with the first two years of school reform.

Changes in accountability coincide with changes in the role of the principal. Under SBM, principals are no longer responsible to a centrally controlled bureaucracy. Chapman (1990), describing school based management in Australia notes that principals are no longer protected by "centrally determined rules and regulations," but must be the coordinator of many people who have many interests and who now determine the direction of the school (p. 227). Here, the principal serves as coordinator, responding to the demands of the school's constituents.

Likewise, Susan Moore Johnson (1990) says that with decentralized governance, principals "become accountable to school communities....They will have to share their authority with parents and teachers, opening matters of policy and practice to scrutiny and influence by new groups of actors" (p. 341). While Johnson describes how principals must be accountable to their school community, Hill and Bonan (1991) add that the school community must share responsibility with the principal for school improvement. In describing a teacher model of school based management, they speak of the parliamentary government notion of "collective responsibility." They state that principals and teachers must feel "collective responsibility" for the school, and like in parliament, believe "...the overall reputation of the school to be too valuable to risk in ruinous conflict" (p. 25). Thus, the incentive is great for schools to be successful.

Murphy (1991) contends that whether schools are restructured using a site-based management approach or a teacher empowerment approach, building administrators must change their role from middle manager for the board of education to facilitator-leader of the school. In restructured schools, according to Murphy, principals will need to put additional emphasis in three areas: "technical core operations, people management, and school-environment relations" (p. 27). Changes in the role of building administrators, Murphy claims, will make the principal's job more exciting, complex, and demanding.

Hess (1990) describes several major the role changes of principals in Chicago's restructured system. Like those in other decentralized districts, principals in Chicago are no longer middle managers responsible to central office, but are chief executives responsible to their managing boards, the local school councils. Another role change for Chicago principals is their new responsibility to provide leadership "...in conducting a needs assessment and developing a school improvement plan" (p. 132). In addition to this, principals in Chicago are now responsible for budgeting at the local level. This requires that they carefully craft the school budget to meet the needs identified in the school improvement plan. Finally, Hess notes that under school reform, principals are responsible for performing staff evaluations and selecting new staff members. According to Hess, these duties were shifted to the local level so that decisions would better meet local needs.

Although the educational literature on decentralization stresses a changing role for principals, there is little research that reports how principal roles actually change under school based management. Brown (1991) reports what principals in a large decentralized district viewed as the strengths and weaknesses of SBM. They clearly liked being able to make decisions locally and the flexibility that local decision making allows and viewed increased faculty and staff involvement in the school as positive. Principals identified time

demands, the lack of resources in the district, and stress associated with decentralization as weaknesses. Although principals were clear about what they did and did not like, how there role had changed under school based management was not specified.

Having reviewed literature which indicates that the roles assumed by principals in decentralized districts must change and research which illustrates a dearth of empirical evidence showing the actual roles principals play under SBM, we now explore how the principals in our monitoring and researching project view their role on the LSC, how their jobs have changed under school based management, and what external factors affect them as they undertake their work.

II. THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS ON SITE BASED COUNCILS[3]

Principals indicated multiple roles that they play on their local school councils and under school based management. Principals' functions range from being information provider, to leader and supporter of the LSC, to motivator, friend and confidant of the council.

Ten of the twelve principals identified various roles that they have assumed which serve to support their local school council's operations. One role that principals play is that of information provider. Seven principals said that they have assumed this responsibility. One principal commented that because he is privy to information that the LSC does not always have, he shares this knowledge with the council. This principal noted that his providing the LSC with informational resources enables the council "to carry on their work."

Another principal made a similar point, saying that his role on the LSC is "...to keep the council informed about the kinds of things that are going on in the school, within the [school] system, and [to] bring to their attention the opportunities, requirements, and responsibilities that we all have." Unlike the first principal who provided information for the LSC to consider so it could carry out its work, this principal, in part, viewed his role to keep the LSC abreast of its duties.

Two of the principals who identified their having assumed a role of providing information to the LSC stated that although this is generally an appropriate role for the principal, it is not without its limits. For example, one principal maintained that much of the information that should go directly to the LSC chair is directed through the principal who serves as a conduit. He said, "The principals have taken on a lot of additional responsibilities as a result of the council, because we get so much written material that goes through the council and comes through us, and we're responsible for seeing that the council gets it." Continuing, he asserted, "...when the Chicago Board of Education or other agencies want things done through the council, it is not appropriate to direct them to the principal

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[3]These results are based on interview data from a relatively small sample. We believe that these are important themes, yet do not expect that they generalize to all principals.

and say, 'See that the council does this.'"

The second principal commented that she was in an uncomfortable position, being expected to provide information to over-zealous individual LSC members. For example, she said,

> Monday, I got this huge stack of things from the council chairperson and some of them were questions and some were comments, whatever. It was about eight or nine pages. Tuesday, I got eleven pages. Now, I'd say every second or third week, I could get that same thing.

The principal stated that the individual requests from this LSC member have been excessive, and thought that she as principal should respond to requests for information only when they come from the entire LSC or a council committee, but not from an individual LSC member.

Four of the principals in our sample had taken on the role of preparing the LSC agenda. Although two principals explicitly stated that they set the agenda for meetings, they questioned whether they should be doing this task. One said,

> Our basic agendas are made up with what I have to say and with the old and new business. I thought that the council could decide on items that could go on the agenda, but they laid back and waited for me to do that part of it.

Another principal commented that his council has had difficulty finding someone to assume the responsibility of LSC chair; consequently, he has been doing the agendas. This situation led this principal to question whether his council is overly dependent upon him and whether he talks or dominates too much at LSC meetings. This principal, however, expressed his desire that the LSC be more active, stating,

> I do think they really ought to assume a little more leadership and responsibility. I think some of them are getting a little tired after two years. As another principal said, "It's time for a new election." This council is getting kind of worn out.

A third principal expressed a similar desire that LSC members be more involved and viewed this as a challenge to her. She stated that she is the person typing the agendas and the minutes and calling council meetings, but she does not want this to be her role. "I don't want to have to do that any more. If this is their council, they really have to move into more active roles." This principal, then, viewed it as a challenge to get the LSC to assume more leadership and to be more active.

Principals also indicated that another role that they hold on their LSC is to get the council to focus on dealing with issues that affect school improvement and students. One principal noted that his most important role is to help the LSC make decisions "that will affect and improve instruction for children and the life of children in school and in the community." This principal, though, found his relationship with the LSC eroding because

of his interaction with two council members. He stated:

> My relationship with the council has always been one of trying to get them to deal with the issue of children, with the issue of our school and how we can improve it...it has been overtly very, very rancor free, but it has been deteriorating at a very rapid pace.

This principal noted that his greatest challenge was to get the LSC to focus on children, but because of his relations with certain LSC members who, according to him, had "poisoned the well" by their involvement in the principal evaluation and selection process, that focus had been lost.

Another principal said that she thinks she has been an "irritant" to those on her council whom she believed were not focusing on the needs of children. A third principal commented, "I really see my role as keeping the council on track for the agenda for improving academics at the school" and said that when she is not an active participant in LSC deliberations, it is because the issues are not focused on academics. She candidly stated, "Usually, if I'm not taking a leadership role in some discussion, it's because I don't think spending the time on it is worthwhile in terms of academic gains. So, when there's a lot of talk about [certain] programs...I usually tune that out. That's not my agenda." For this principal, getting the LSC to concentrate on issues which will lead to students' academic improvements is most important.

Principals also identified other roles that they play in backing the LSC. One principal said that it is her role to be supportive of the LSC and to motivate the council to keep going. Another person indicated that she takes a personal interest in her council members, viewing them each individually. She noted that she tries to understand where each person is "coming from" and that if they have problems, she talks and listens to them. This principal also commented on the importance of her remaining objective, bringing out the positive on the LSC, and trying to avoid fights between council members and others in the school. Describing this balancing act, she said, "I feel like a juggler - in the middle, trying to juggle." Another summed up the multiple capacities that he plays, stating that in part his role has been "friend, confidant, colleague, antagonist, protagonist, many, many kinds of things."

One principal noted that his role on the LSC is different than the rest of the council members because he maintains the "responsibility for day-to-day operations of the school, and nobody else has that responsibility." To ensure that the LSC was clear that day-to-day operations remained his responsibility, this principal requested that the LSC sign a statement with this stipulation. Another principal expressed a similar comment about his day-to-day responsibilities while characterizing his role on the LSC. He stated,

> Obviously, I have much greater impact on a lot of things because of my day-to-day running of things. I want the council to be informed to pass policy and to guide them in terms of what the parents want. That puts me in the position of being a peer, but more of a prime minister -- a member of the

council, but one who actually goes out and gets the job done afterward.

For this principal, carrying out LSC directives is clearly his responsibility.

Finally, two principals explicitly identified that they are the educational expert in the school. One principal viewed himself "as the leader of the educational component of the council." A second principal distinctly articulated the role she plays as educational expert and the mistakes other principals have made since the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act. She asserted:

> I, unlike many principals, do not feel that reform meant that we were no longer the experts on what was going on in our schools. Principals who have sat back and allowed other people to start running their schools have made a big mistake. There's nobody who has more information than I do about the school. Being the best informed and the most trained person, I think it's appropriate that I take that kind of leadership role.

By virtue of her knowledge and educational background, this principal maintains no one is better prepared to assume the position as expert than she.

III. CHANGES TO THE PRINCIPALSHIP UNDER SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT

In addition to indicating what roles they play on their local school councils, we asked principals in this sample to identify how their job as principal is different under site based management. Changes in the principalship include having to adopt a collaborative style of decision making; possessing greater control over budgeting and flexibility over school programs; and working longer hours in an altered work environment.

Seven principals indicated that how they must go about making decisions has changed under school based management. They noted that now, before a decision is made, they must consult (in most instances) with their local school councils, and sometimes with teachers in the school. One principal commented,

> When I propose something, I have to discuss it with the PPAC, with the council....Before any decisions can be made, there is a whole loop that has to be gone through. So I don't make any decisions now without consultations and they require time lines. For example, our last council meeting was over a month ago....A number of things have come up between then that we've had to run past council members or try and get feedback on informally.

This principal, however, said she was not complaining about the time constraints involved with having to consult with others prior to making decisions, but just noting their existence.

Another principal acknowledged the benefit of seeking input prior to making decisions, saying that when a decision is made with the input of others, then you have a

"pure" decision and you are not forcing you own thinking upon others. He continued, though, saying, "My problem with it is that I am so impatient and I want to get things done. This waiting and waiting is very difficult for me. I don't know if I will ever get used to it. Deadlines are deadlines." Furthermore, although others are taking part in decision making, this principal noted that he is still ultimately responsible for getting things done; for him, tension exists between the time required to consult with others when making decisions and wanting to accomplish certain tasks. Another principal accepted this tension as a simple fact of school based management. She said, "...the whole thing about school based management and the fact [is] it just takes time. You have to deal with people and be able to communicate with people and deal with them." Simply put, this principal asserted that involving others places more demands on her time.

In addition to principals having changed how they go about making decisions, they also noted that more decisions are made locally than prior to school decentralization. This has enabled principals and schools to possess greater autonomy and latitude. For example, principals identified that they now have greater control over monetary decisions. Seven principals in our sample identified possessing greater leeway over budgeting or determining how to spend discretionary money as having benefitted their schools. For example, a principal of a small school which received no State Chapter I funding prior to reform[4] viewed the money that the school now gets as a "windfall" and said she can make simple decisions about purchasing furniture without having to rely on the district office taking responsibility for this. Another principal said that some of the teachers' wishes are now fulfilled as a result of increased discretionary funding. According to this principal, determining how to spend money at the school level fostered the belief that some goals could now be accomplished and led to a sense of empowerment among teachers.

Another principal commented that the number of budgetary items that she must deal with has increased immensely. Prior to the school reform act's implementation, she controlled only a few budgetary items. She said,

> For example, prior to school reform - and I'm not complaining about this, this is just the fact - we had two budgetary items that we were concerned with. We had a textbook fund and a supply fund, and we even had a postage stamp fund and we were told how many dollars there were in the fund and we could decide whether we wanted 3 or 10 cent stamps. Do you know what I'm saying? But, there was a postage stamp fund. That was it. Now, I have funds coming out of my kazoo. Just keeping a running balance of how much money we have in each fund....There are at least 10 different funds in the bilingual [account], there's immigrant money, State Chapter I money, every program has funds....With all this freedom comes a lot of responsibility and a lot of

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[4]State Chapter I funds are discretionary monies provided to public schools from the State of Illinois. This money has traditionally been used to support the entire school system. With the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act, however, this money was shifted back to schools for their intended uses. The amount of funding that any given school receives is based on the school's number of low-income students.

time.

This principal described handling money at the school level as a "monumental task," and noted that she has mentioned to her colleagues that schools need business managers to deal with funds. Another principal echoed these comments saying that he now has more control over discretionary money; such control gives principals more latitude in what they can do.

In addition to having more freedom over budgeting and discretionary funds, four principals indicated that they also have increased flexibility in determining programs and requirements which better match their school's needs. For example, one principal said that his school decided to change its graduation requirements. The LSC at this school accepted the teachers' recommendations requiring students to take a world history class and an ethnic studies course. It was also decided to change the art and music requirements. The principal surmised that these changes occurred because of the local autonomy which the school reform act allows. He noted, "Five years ago, I would have asked the district superintendent if I could do that. Now I mention it to the district superintendent and it's: 'It's local reform; if the council approves, it's fine.' So, we probably couldn't have done it five years ago; someone would have stopped us."

Other principals assessed their increased flexibility. One asserted, "The fact that we can determine in our building what programs we want is wonderful to me." Another commented that although the school had not drastically changed its curriculum, "...there is much more freedom in terms of how to address the needs of the children in your classroom." As an example of this, this principal said that unlike in the past, she no longer must get permission from the district superintendent to use a particular basal text for her school. Teachers now have more leeway in choosing materials for the school. Another principal cited that she has more power in the areas of programming, hiring teachers, and determining how to spend money as a result of reform.

Other principals indicated that their job is different by virtue of the sheer amount of time that they must devote to the LSC. One principal who was responsible for running two schools prior to the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act said that she works just as many hours running one school as she did two. She commented that although evening council meetings result in long hours,

> "...it's not just the council meetings, it's preparing for the council meetings. What I know in my mind...it takes a lot of time to get it from my mind - things that I know intuitively - sometimes, I have to put that down on paper for people and explain it to people....There's a lot more time communicating than before. I find that to be a challenge, or even a problem. It is very draining."

Principals generally concurred that the amount of time that they must commit to their councils is excessive and several mentioned that this time commitment has resulted in other instructional tasks not being completed. One principal asserted that her time is being "controlled" by the council, and because of the time she allots to the LSC, the time she

works with students and devotes to teacher observations has been rushed. Another person commented that he has had to change the way he worked from being the principal and instructional leader in the school to being principal/superintendent. He stated,

> ...our biggest challenge has been to restructure my own working relationship so that I realized that I had an active and controlling board, so that I realized that I was no longer just a principal but a superintendent/principal type with that school board.

This principal indicated that being a "superintendent" *and* an instructional leader is difficult for him; that carrying out the "superintendent-like" duties is a job in and of itself. Ironically, this principal noted that after his LSC decided not to offer him a new contract, he was able to resume his instructional leadership activities. He noted,

> I have probably visited more classrooms, and have talked to more kids, and have done more instructional leadership than I did...when I was faced with having to constantly come to council meetings, work up the energy, work up the paperwork, work up the attitude, develop the strategies, call up people, and get them prepared so that they would speak. Those kind of things were really major time consumers.

For this principal, the superintendent part of his job (working with the LSC) kept him from carrying out the principal part of his job (providing instructional leadership). This sentiment was repeated by one principal who commented that she had not seen additional benefits come to the school because of the LSC. "I would rather spend the time it takes me to prepare for the [council] meetings to observe the classrooms and work with the teachers. I think that would have a bigger payoff," she contended. "It has interfered with that."

Still another principal said that he had not seen the work of the council having reached the classroom yet.

> [I]f there is a disappointment for me to this point, it is that I am having a very difficult time, two years into this, seeing how it affects the kids sitting in Algebra class. I don't know if anyone else has raised that issue for you, but I think that ultimately all of this has to touch kids in classrooms. If it doesn't, then we're wasting time.

This principal said that he hoped that it is just too early in the reform movement to see change, but still questioned how governance translates into more effective classrooms.

Principals also spoke about the atmosphere in which they must now conduct their work and how this has changed the principalship. For example, they identified no longer having job security (because the LSC decides whether each principal will receive a new four-year-contract) as affecting their work environment. For example, principals commented that the LSC's power to decide whether a principal gets a new contract keeps them on guard. One person said that principals have to develop a strategy in case they get an uncooperative

council. She stated,

> "My strategy is that if I get a new council and I see that they are going to waste my time and I won't be able to work with them, I am going to start applying to other schools and other jobs....I don't mind if a principal's fired, but it seems very arbitrary. Maybe somebody on the council didn't like that person. I don't think that's fair....I may be wrong but I feel like it's demeaning that those people should have to decide whether I get to keep my job or not.

Another principal expressed that the reality is to "stay alive as principal and protect his job." On a day-to-day basis, principals are conscious of the terms and duration of their contract. This influences the decisions that principals make, according to him, because jobs are at stake.

When speaking about the added responsibilities and demands of his job, another person noted why principals did not delegate any of their many new tasks to others. "Initially," he said, "I think because the councils were given life or death authority over principals, principals felt that they had to handle everything themselves in order to be sure that they survived." This principal further addressed the issue of the LSC's authority to hire and fire principals. According to him, if the entire school community of parents, teachers, and community members makes the decision to fire the principal, that is alright; however, he would have difficulty if this decision was not truly a community decision. He stated,

> I think that what I would have a problem with is someone who has not made any significant contribution and suddenly becomes a loud voice and says, "We need somebody else." I think that's the concern of most principals. They don't want Johnny-come-lately popping up like a jack-in-the-box and saying, "This guy has to go." I find it hard to believe that anybody really wants to try and stay and work in a situation where they're not wanted.

One principal who failed to receive a new contract from his council said he disliked the fact that no appeal process exists for those principals who feel their contract decision was unfair. He also commented that the LSC is accountable to no one:

> ....whenever I talk about failures, I do not take all the responsibility for failures because there are eleven members of the council and I am one of eleven so the other ten people must share equally the burden....When a principal is not rehired, then it is fair to say that eleven people did not succeed. Unfortunately, the law doesn't touch ten of those but it does touch one.

According to this principal, the school reform act fails to hold all LSC members equally accountable and principals get the short end of the stick.

Principals also mentioned other factors that adversely affect the environment in which they work. For example, two principals stated that they now have ten new bosses and serve

multiple masters. One principal noted what he experienced because of this, saying that several members of his LSC did not view themselves as partners, but as "overlords."

Another commented on unkept promises that were made to principals. She said that they did not receive promised salary increases although principals have assumed additional responsibilities. Teachers received salary increases but principals received nothing. She complained, "There have been a lot of inequities for principals in this whole thing and nobody speaks out for us." Because of what she characterized as a lack of support from the district, this principal noted that after 33 years of pouring her "heart and soul" into this school system, she is looking elsewhere for a job. According to some of the principals in this sample, these factors have adversely affected their work environment.

IV. EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE WORK OF PRINCIPALS

Principals also identified other factors that affect them as they undertake their work. Most of these comments focused on the lack of adequate funding for the school district and on central office services.

Although mostly appreciative of controlling the budget locally, four principals indicated that the school district as a whole remains under funded. One commented that state mandates for achievement now exist, yet there is no additional money to help meet them. Another principal asserted that contrary to what state politicians claimed, the Chicago School Reform Act was not a revenue neutral bill because the State Chapter I money that once generally supported the entire school system is no longer available for that purpose nor was it replaced with new funds for general support. Of the Board of Education's financial state, this principal said:

> We need more money. Now you can argue anything you want, but the fact that...when you have a cold, you have one need for medication. When you have a cardiac condition, you have other needs. We have too many cardiac conditions in the city of Chicago. We need more money to deal with them.

Chicago's education needs are so great, he argues, additional money is the only way that they will be addressed.

Another principal explicitly attributed Chicago's school's funding problems to the state government.

> If we only had the resources other people had, we'd produce the results. We're just so badly shackled by a state government that says, "To hell with education." And specifically, "To hell with education for minorities."

This principal characterized the state's funding posture as a "disgusting racist attitude" to under fund education.

Another factor that principals said adversely affects their work stems from the board

of education's central and district offices. Statements about these offices ranged from one principal declaring that there is no leadership from above to another saying that the money spent to support central office needs to be further scrutinized to another declaring that if district and central offices do not become more helpful to principals, they should be closed.

One principal who found central office to be of little help acknowledged that employees there are now overworked as a result of the downsizing of personnel. Speaking of the services he received from one central office department, this principal said:

> We had positions that were supposed to be open in September for extended day that we didn't get until April. If you go down there, they have this stuff stacked up halfway to the ceiling. I feel sorry for the poor people who have to do the job. They don't have the staff to do it but we pay the serious price.

This principal questioned: "Whose fault is it? Well, it's nobody's fault when there's chaos; that's the way it goes. The ship is taking on water fast and everybody is running around looking for life boats and the jobs don't get done."

Finally, principals said that they still have to complete too much paperwork, possess little control over their building engineering personnel, and power remains at central office. Also, one new principal spoke of new principals inheriting an administrative staff--one which may not have loyalty to the principal or share the same vision--and not being able to select their own team. According to principals in this sample, these situations serve to thwart them in their work.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As suggested by the literature on school restructuring, the principals in this sample have experienced changes in the roles that they play. By virtue of the local school council's existence, principals have assumed new roles. Furthermore, school based management has resulted in changes to the principalship. (See Summary Table).

Principals indicated that they have assumed the role of information provider for the LSC, familiarizing their councils of school programs, helping them to interpret their duties, and serving as conduits of information from outside sources. Furthermore, some principals indicated that they have assumed leadership positions on the LSC, helping the council to set agendas and focus its activities on children and academics. Principals indicated that they remain responsible for carrying on the day-to-day business of the school and, at times, implementing LSC policy. Principals also informed us that they expend much time and energy in supporting their local school councils so that they can function and make decisions. This is consistent with Murphy's (1991) assertion that principals in restructured schools need to put additional emphasis on people management.

Principals in this sample also indicated that their jobs are in some ways different because of school based management. For example, principals have demonstrated that they do consult with their LSC and, in some cases, teachers prior to making decisions. This is

Summary Table

How Principals' Describe their Role on LSCs:

- *Information Provider*
  - Inform LSC of school programs and affairs
  - Explain and interpret LSC duties
  - Act as conduit of information from outside sources
- *Leader and Supporter of LSC*
  - Set LSC agenda
  - Focus LSC on children and academics
  - Motivator, friend, confidant of LSC
- *Day-to-Day Basis School Administrator/Educational Expert*

How Principals Describe Changes to the Principalship

- *Must consult with LSC and faculty on most decisions*
- *Greater control over budgeting*
- *Greater flexibility over school programs*
- *Changes to the work environment*
  - Work longer hours
  - Have lost job security
  - Have ten new "bosses" (LSC members)
  - Additional responsibilities without additional pay

External Factors Affecting Principals' Work

- *Under funding of the school district*
- *Little support from central office*

consistent with Johnson's (1990) comment that principals in restructured schools need to share authority with various constituent groups. Respondents also said that they now possess greater control over the budgeting process and that there is greater flexibility in determining school programs.

Although they viewed the increased discretion and flexibility as a positive change in their jobs, principals indicated that they now work longer hours without job security or a salary increase, and they have to report to ten new bosses. These factors, along with the school system remaining drastically under funded and the perception by some principals that central office is unresponsive, all contribute to a negative work environment and make the principal's job more difficult.

Other comments expressed by principals in this sample are also noteworthy. For example, principals clearly indicated that they commit great amounts of time to their LSCs and that this can take away from other activities like observing classrooms and planning. If this is the case, then solutions are needed to help principals to support their LSC while continuing to serve as instructional leaders. Principals may need to delegate responsibilities and may in fact feel more comfortable doing that now, given that every current principal has been awarded a four year contract. Principals may need to realize that delegation and sharing of duties is no longer an option; it must occur.

Principals also commented about the difficulty of getting LSC approval and making decisions between council meetings. This problem may be addressed by developing a communication system among all council members so that they can be assembled for a call meeting to deal with untimely issues.

One principal noted that budgeting has become a monumental task for her and that she has commented that schools may need business managers. Within this comment lies a potential solution to the very problem she identified. Perhaps, principals and LSCs need to divide these responsibilities among several staff members or volunteers.

Finally, there is an accountability issue that needs to be addressed. As suggested by Hill and Bonan (1991), the entire school community must share the responsibility with the principal for school improvement. There is, however, no indication that this is occurring to the necessary extent. To the contrary, as one principal in this study pointed out, it is the principal who is held responsible and accountable -- to the point of being fired -- when improvements do not occur as envisioned.

Many of the themes and areas of concern identified by the principals in this study will be further tested in a system-wide survey of all Chicago public school principals. This survey is being developed and conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, a group whose membership is comprised of local universities, educational research and advocacy organizations (including the Chicago Panel), and the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Planning of the Chicago public school system. This survey will ask principals about their current roles and how they have changed, about factors which interfere with the work of principals, and about the current and desired types of support needed by principals. Such system-wide data should prove useful to principals as they tackle the most important goal of their job: to improve the education afforded to the students in their schools.

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